THE OBSERVER.

BY BEATRICE IRONSIDE.

The friend of Socrates, the friend of Plato,
But above all, the friend of truth.

BALTIMORE: Printed (for the Editor) by JOSEPH ROBINSON, and published every Saturday morning, at No. 4, North Charles-ſtreet; where Subſcriptions, Communications, Advertiſements, &c. are received.....Terms of ſubſcription, Five Dollars a year, payable in advance.

Vol. II. *Saturday, September* 12, 1807. *No.* 11.

HINTS ON THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF THE ART OF WRITING.

"Writing preſerves the memory of paſt tranſactions, of obſervation, and experience. It preſerves literary productions, and tends to improve and to extend the uſe of ſpeech."

INSTITUTES OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY.

Men at firſt are ſatisfied with ſimply converſing together when preſent; nor is it till the love of ſociety is greatly improved and heightened, that they deviſe the means of communicating one with another when abſent or at a diſtance. Hence were emblems, written characters, hieroglyphics, and all the other marks or ſymbols of ideas or ſentiments, invented. By this happy diſcovery, the human mind became conſcious of ſomething like new powers; the moſt remarkable events, and the moſt valuable contrivances, were conveyed to other nations or tranſmitted to poſterity; ſociety was cemented by ſtronger ties, and the range of every ſcience conſiderably enlarged. No age, however ancient, no people, however rude or barbarous, but has poſſeſſed ſome method of recording paſt events. Imitation is one of our firſt and moſt forcible principles of action; and there is not a period in our hiſtory in which we have not been ingenious enough to copy ſome draughts from Nature, however imperfect.

There are two ways of communicating our ſentiments by art: one by ſound, and one by writing. Sound is more ready and forcible, writing more extenſive and permanent. By having the ſentiments of others placed before us, we can pauſe, reflect, and judge, deliberately on what effects they ought to produce; whereas thoſe communicated by ſound only, if once forgotten, can never be recalled. An oration, delivered with proper action, ſtrikes more than the moſt pathetic diſcourſe we can read. The nobleſt efforts of eloquence are always accompanied with ſuitable looks and geſticulations.

This naturally ſuggeſts a ſtriking diſtinction between the art of ſpeaking and that of reading. The action of the Reader muſt correſpond to a certain poſition of the eye; thoſe of the

Speaker are capable of much greater variety, as naturally arising from the sentiments occasioned in his own mind by those he delivers to others. If, therefore, a discourse, pronounced without acting the particular passions it describes, appear dull and spiritless, an affected display of these, while reading, only seems peculiarly absurd and pedantick. Reading and speaking are, notwithstanding, often taken for synonimous arts, and for that reason most ridiculously confounded. In juvenile life, while the fancy is fiery and powerful, we are fond of every thing flowery and romantick. Hence many young people of both sexes, no sooner open a book than the most preposterous airs are assumed, their head wavers as dissatisfied with its natural position, and one or either of their hands saws the air, as Hamlet says, in a manner equally foppish and aukward.

Communicating our ideas by letters is a much later invention than the use of articulate sounds : the one, indeed, seems plainly an improvement on the other. Letters are signs of words, and words of ideas ; articulation must consequently be prior to every species of written or engraved character. Signs of sounds are presented to the eye, and sounds formed into words are addressed to the ear. Though there is not the least relation between these two organs, ideas conveyed by letters, after passing through the sense of hearing, have not the least influence in weakening the impression.

The first characters men would naturally use, would be such as have the nearest and most sensible connection or relation to the thing signified by them as pictures and images. If one, at the dawn of this astonishing art, was to convey the idea of a man murdered, he would cut out in stone, or carve in wood, the picture of the man lying on the ground, and of another standing over him in a menacing posture with a deadly weapon in his hand.

This, in fact, was the method practised for a long time, but capable of representing such things only as could be perceived by the eye. Men considered this peculiar form of expression as susceptible of much improvement. Hence they substituted whatever objects they imagined had any relation to the thing signified, in order, by that means, to express those ideas which have been denominated universal, or abstract, or of reflection. They likewise abridged their pictures, and supplied the want of them with what are commonly called hieroglyphicks. Thus they represented a man by his head, knowledge by an eye, and eternity by a circle. The stork signified a dutiful child, because of the long and rooted affection retained by this bird for its parent. For a man universally hated, they used an eel, which is known to associate with no other fish.

The Egyptians, among the ancients, were peculiarly famous for their use of these hieroglyphicks ; which seem also to have been known to the Mexicans when America was first discovered. By these they informed their Emperour when the Span-

iards first landed on their coast. It is generally believed the Egyptian priests invented the characters used in their country for the purpose of concealing their religious mysteries from the knowledge of the vulgar. It seems more probable, however, they were only the effects of necessity; for, the moment a correspondence commenced with other nations, these ancient characters became obsolete, or at least unpopular. Then priests and philosophers only retained them, and afterwards made use of them to secrete their sacred rites from those who had now forgot their meaning.

The Greeks, observing the tricks to which they were accommodated by priests and imposters in their time, reprobated them as the infamous vestigia of priest-craft. A certain species of them, however, has been observed to obtain among most rude nations of modern discovery. The native inhabitants of Peru use a small cord, intermixed with knots of different magnitudes, which answer the same ends as hieroglyphicks, and by which they are enabled to make some distinct register of their most important transactions. It is from the same principle that, when objects exceed their powers of computation, which are extremely stinted, they point to the hair of their head, intimating that they are equal to them, or with wonder declare them innumerable.

The Chinese letters are a kind of abridged pictures, as is evident from the resemblance they bear to those ancient hieroglyphick characters which convey the same or similar ideas.... They have an alphabet, though every separate letter stands for a distinct conception by itself. Their characters are consequently exceedingly numerous, and to decypher them fully would require a whole life-time. Some say they amount in all to fifty millions and seventy thousand. Their abridged characters are compounded two different ways for representing various things; which shews, by the by, that their letters have no relation to words. To express weeping, they draw the figure of an eye. Water is considered by them as symbolical of daughters, and the sea of mothers, because in nature the one is produced by the other. Some neighbouring nations, who speak a different language from the Chinese, but understand their letters, carry on a literary correspondence with them. Hence it would seem their letters are signs of ideas only. How many understand Spanish characters, and can read a book in that language, who, notwithstanding, are entirely ignorant of its meaning!

This method of writing being attended with many inconveniencies; some, it is probable, observing the various combinations of sound, formed a syllabical alphabet, comprehending a great number of simple ones, by which writing was rendered more easy and expeditious. An elementary system of this kind was first used in Ethiopia, or the interiour parts of Africa. At last some happy genius arose, who, considering more accu-

rately the primary principles of language, invented the letters now universally used in Europe, and in most parts of the civilized world. His name is unfortunately buried in the darkness of antiquity, without receiving that honour posterity owes, and would certainly have paid him, had he been known.

Cadmus brought sixteen letters from Phenicia to Egypt, or, as some say, from Egypt to Greece. This illustrious character is but little known to posterity. He is said, however, to have been cotemporary with Moses and Joshua, or, as some say, with David and Solomon. Plato says, in his dialogues, that Jath, the Egyptian, was the first who composed an alphabet of consonants and vowels; and his authority, considering his abilities, his regard for truth, and his intimate acquaintance with Egypt, into which he travelled in pursuit of knowledge, may be deemed almost decisive.

The method of executing the mechanical part of the art practised by the Hebrews, Phenicians, Syrians, Arabians, and even by the ancient Greeks and Romans, was originally from right to left. Afterwards, the habit of writing both from right to left and from left to right, was introduced. This double way of writing, as it may be called, continued till the time of Solon, when that of writing from left to right had the preference, which it still retains.

The materials used in this art were often changed. Pillars of stone seem to have been the most ancient. These were probably supplanted in later times by tables of lead. Barks of trees, dressed hides, and boards of wood covered with green wax, were likewise used for the same purpose, Nor was it till the thirteenth or fourteenth centuries that pens, ink, and paper, or parchment, were applied to; an art which by these means, and these ages, has been surprisingly improved.

The names of the letters in the Greek, Roman, and Hebrew alphabets, being pretty much the same, they seem not improbably to have been derived at first from the Phenicians or Hebrews. At all event, the Greek alphabet may easily be traced to Cadmus; for, by inverting the letters, according to the custom of the Hebrews, a very great similarity may be observed to subsist between these alphabets.

From this brief detail, we are naturally struck with astonishment at the powers of invention. Well may the mind of man reflect with a mixture of wonder and delight on her own strength, extensive capacity, and the many great and material alterations she has occasioned in the system of things. The principles of reason and taste are certainly characteristick of the species; but what would these principles avail us, independent of that contrivance and activity, those talents of improvement and emulation, by which the track of intelligent beings is thus specifically distinguished? It is this that emancipates our natures from the horrours of savage ferocity, that exalts us so highly above all our brother animals, that subjects the wildest ele-

ments to our convenience, and which every where alleviates the gloom that broods over human destiny. Nor does the mind ever discover more force, more ardour, or a more daring spirit of enterprize, than while she recognizes the sovereign influence of all those operative and master springs by which she thus invents and executes, plans and improves.

For the Observer.

I dreamed the other night, I was roving in an obscure and unfrequented part of the woods, (where I cannot charge my recollection) when suddenly I heard a sweet and well known voice, at no great distance from the spot where I was standing; it appeared to be the voice of her whom I consider to be the paragon of perfection, the dignified ornament of her sex; and the adorable object of my sincere and ardent affections. As the lovely fair one from whom the voice proceeded approached nearer, I immediately recognized the well known features of the amiable and unparallelled *****; she beckoned to me, and I without a moments hesitation, followed her into the more remote recesses of the woods, where after exposing ourselves to a path, which was rendered almost impassible, from the quantity of briers which grew over it, we happily arrived at a most luxurient and pleasant grove, enriched with woodbines and jessamines; and where a purling stream invited us to partake of its sweets. We sat down together on a turf which was moistened by the dew which just then began to fall; the moon beams which reflected on the dark mirrour of the waters, that were scarcely visible, owing to the thick foliage of the trees, gave additional and fanciful lustre to the objects which arrested our attention. The silence of the night was broken by the charming converse of the inimitable —— who seemed to enjoy the prospects around us; we conversed for a considerable time on the various picturesque and diversified scenes which struck our fancy, and pleased our immagination. We had not long (as I thought) been seated, before we were suddenly interrupted by the shrill and hoarse voice of a person passing precipitately behind us: I unfortunately turned round to see what occasioned this noise, when to my utter astonishment, I beheld a cheerful group of nymphs seated at a very neat repast, under a small arbour, where mirth and conviality seemed to reign. After viewing this scene with no small degree of satisfaction and delight I again turned round with an intention of renewing the conversation which was thus disturbed. I was much disappointed and chagrined at not seeing the fair ——, for she had during this interval disappeared. I got up and walked for some time under the umbrageous branches of the lofty oaks, through which the faint lights of the moon reflected, whenever it im-

merged from the blushing clouds, resumed its accustomed splendour, and somewhat removed the gloomy appearance of the night which I thought had assumed a melancholy aspect on account of the clouds which floated along the vast expanse of the universe. Tout a Coup † I perceived not far off a glimmering light which I concluded in an instant to be an ignis fatuus, but upon a more minute examination, my doubts were entirely cleared, for instead of rising in a regular gradation from the earth, remained stationary, and going up to it, I fancied it to be a small cottage very neatly constructed, and encompassed with a nice hedge. I knocked at the door and the noise awoke me.

SOMNUS.

† All of a sudden.

From the Rev. Mr. Martin Sherlock's "New Letters."

The count de Peltzer, an officer in the Prussian service, was the only son of a widow near sixty years old. He was handsome, brave to an excess, and deeply in love with mademoiselle de Benskow. She was in her eighteenth year, genteel, pretty, and born with an extreme sensibility. Her lover, just turned off twenty, was loved with a passion equal to his own, and the day was fixed to make them happy. It was the 20th of June 1778.

The Prussian troops are always ready to take the field. On the 17th of June, at ten o'clock at night, the count's regiment received orders to march at midnight for Silesia. He was at Berlin, and his mistress at a country-house four leagues from the town. He set off consequently without seeing her; and he wrote to her from the first place where he stopped, that it was impossible for him to live without her; that it was essential to his happiness that she should follow him immediately, and that they should be married in Silesia. He wrote at the same time to her brother, who was his most intimate friend, to plead his cause with her parents. She set out then accompanied by this brother, and by her lover's mother. Never did the sands of Brandenbourgh appear so heavy as to this charming girl; but at length the journey ended, and she arrived at the town of Herstadt: it was in the morning, "and never," said the brother to me, "did my eyes see a woman lovelier than my sister: the exercise of the journey had added to her bloom, and her eyes painted what passed in her heart." But, O human prospects! how deceitful are you! How near often is the moment of wretchedness to the moment of felicity! The carriage is stopped to let pass some soldiers, who, advancing with slow steps, bore in their arms a wounded officer. The tender heart of the young lady was affected at the sight: she little suspected that it was her lover.

Some Austrian foragers had approached this town, and the young count went out to repulse them. Burning to distinguish himself, he rushed with ardour before his troops, and fell the victim of his unhappy impetuosity.

To describe to you the situation of this unfortunate young woman, would be to infult at once your heart and your imagination. Her lover is placed in his bed; his mother is at his feet, and his mistress holds his hand. "Oh Charlotte!" cried he, opening his dying eye...he wanted to speak; but his voice broke, and he melted into tears. His tone had pierced the soul of his mistress; she lost her reason, and, "No, I will not survive you," cried she, quite frantick, and seizing a sword.... They disarmed her, and he made a sign with his hand that they should bring her to his bed-side. She came; he grasped her arm; and after two painful efforts to speak, he says with a sob, "Live, my Charlotte, to comfort my mother," and expires.

P. S. I found this history so affecting, that it appeared to me to merit a place in my collection; and I believe that every feeling reader will thank me for it. I forgot to tell you, that, in the troop which made that sally, there were but two men wounded, and he alone killed. When I passed through Berlin, in July, 1779, the unfortunate lady had not recovered her senses.

RELIGIOUS ENMITY.

The present article from Naudè, while it contains some interesting anecdotes, is just and philosophical.

'When I was at Rome, I could not help telling many devotees, that when *Religion* seizes and overpowers the mind, it makes it consider *actions* and *characters* through the medium of interest, and hence it should not be relied on. For instance: the ancient fathers have said every thing they could imagine to depreciate the character of Julian the Apostate. Though they would not have done this, had he not proved an apostate and a persecutor of the Christians; they do not in the slightest manner notice his many eminent qualities. He was rigorously just, a man of strict morals, and a great politician. See what Montaigne and La Mothe le Vayer observe of him; and particularly his character, elaborately delineated by Mr. Gibbon.

'Constantine murdered his brother-in-law, his nephew at twelve years of age, his father-in-law, his own son, and his wife...This wretch feigned to found Constantinople by order of God...This supposed Revelation shews his character...He is extolled by the Christians to be one of the greatest of men, because he thought proper to burn Christians for a vile political purpose.

'So also Diocletian, so far from being a persecutor, as the Christians defame him, gave them full enjoyment of their liber-

ty twenty years of his reign. It was only two years before his death that he, with other Emperours, punished them for state reasons. On the contrary, he had suffered them to grow so numerous that they became too strong for him. Read the Monkish account of Diocletian.

'It is thus also in Venice. Anthony Bragadin passes for a martyr, because he was flayed alive at the command of Mustapha, after the taking of Famagusta. But the fact is, that the Turks are only like other men; and they thus punished Bragadin, and his other Christian captains, because, when they saw they must be taken by Mustapha, they barbarously cut the throats of all their Turkish prisoners.

'It is owing also to this cause, that the devotees say every thing favourable of Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland, because she attended mass very constantly; though it must be confessed, that her conduct was seldom regulated by decency and morality. I saw, at Rome—adds Naudé—the letter she wrote to the Earl of Bothwell, *Subactoroti suo*. And I cannot but believe whatever has been said of her by Buchanan and De Thou.'

Voltaire has defended the character of Jane of Naples. She appears to have resembled Mary. Men of genius are oftner pleased with paradox than with truth.

It was thus likewise the prejudiced Puritans treated Marlowe, a poet well known to the readers of Old English Poetry. Marlowe had in his life time treated with great freedom sacred subjects. His sentiments, which now so many profess without fear of exciting the enmity of the religious, these men construed into absolute Atheism, as Warton observes. Marlowe having been assassinated in an amorous adventure, they took pains to represent the unfortunate catastrophe of his untimely death, as an immediate judgment from Heaven upon his execrable impiety! Such opinions are promulgated at every hour by the bigot, who always sees in the *misfortunes* of his enemy the *judgment* of Heaven.

BIOGRAPHICAL AND LITERARY NOTICES,

Concerning the late Dr. James Beattie, *Professor of Moral Philosophy and Logic in the Mareschal College of New Aberdeen.*

Mr. James Beattie was born in the year 1755. His father was a small farmer in the county of Kincardine, in the north of Scotland; one of that class of men who, from the peculiar circumstances of their local situation in renting a few acres of land, are rather destined to be comfortable than rich, and whose ambition is gratified, if, from the produce of their soil, they are able to rear a family in an humble but reputable condition.

It is matter of regret, that so few particulars can be known concerning the infancy and childhood of such as are destined,

in future life, to become distinguished by their genius and intellectual attainments. When a child is born, no person can perceive whether he shall be a wise man or a fool. He is reared up as a common undistinguished individual of the species, whether he possess or possess not from nature that peculiar aptitude and fitness of temperament which constitute genius. After a few years, he begins to show to what class he belongs: if to the former, the latent energies of his nature begin to work, the hidden germs of talent are gradually unfolded, the blossoms flourish in primeval beauty, and, under auspicious circumstances, the future fruit may be expected. From this period, in the progress of genius, more or less attention is generally directed to observe its peculiarities, and mark its future developement.

Those symptoms, which have been mentioned as characteristick of talent, are only *the effects* of numerous combinations of causes, which, under the influence of the original temperament, have produced them. These combinations of causes, however, have altogether escaped notice, and have no otherwise been known to exist, but by the effects they are perceived to have produced. These are observed and admired, without reflecting upon the manner in which they have come to exist, without having accurately marked those physical, moral, and local circumstances, which have, in conjunction, occasioned their display. But there is the greatest probability, that upon these circumstances, *in early infancy*, modified by the natural organization, genius and talent of every kind depend: Therefore, no precise knowledge of its origin, its growth, and natural history, can be acquired, without the most assiduous and continued attention to those various and intermingled circumstances...from the moment of human existence, until their effects begin to be displayed.

These remarks are, perhaps, more applicable to those who have distinguished themselves in the fine arts, than to any other class of literary men, and in particular to poets.

We have no means of becoming acquainted with the dispositions and incidents which marked the childhood of Beattie; but were they all enumerated, and were it possible that we could behold him in every scene from the cradle to the school, it might then be possible, perhaps, to catch the circumstance which first strongly impressed his youthful fancy with devotion to the Muses, and to ascertain the lucky period from which he was destined to be a poet.

Anecdotes of children are always agreeable; but those little stories which describe the character of children who possess the rudiments of genius, would be still more interesting. Few of these are ever known. But when the science of mind shall be more closely studied, when mankind in general shall be convinced that it is necessary, in this study, to attend to the transactions of the nursery, as well as those of the field; to watch the operations of growing intellect, as well as those of its maturer vi-

gour; we may then expect a gratification and enlargement of curious knowledge, which at present can only be predicted.

It is probable that Beattie, in delineating the character of Edwin, in the Minstrel, drew it from his own in early youth... This character is more or less common to every body of poetical genius; and we may therefore suppose, that the childhood of our young poet would be often spent in solitary contemplation, and in ruminating among those objects of grandeur and rural beauty which formed the delight of the young Minstrel.

"But why should I his childish feats display?
Concourse, and noise, and toil, he ever fled;
Nor card to mingle in the clamourous fray
Of squabbling imps; but to the forest sped,
Or roam'd at large the lonely mountain's head;
Or, where the maze of some bewildered stream
To deep untrodden groves his footsteps led,
There would he wander wild, till Phoebus' beam,
Shot from the western cliff, releas'd the weary team.

"Lo! where the stripling, rapt in wonder roves
Beneath the precipice o'erhung with pine;
And sees, on high, amidst th' encircling groves,
From cliff to cliff the foaming torrents shine:
While waters, woods, and winds, in concert join,
And echo swells the chorus to the skies:
Would Edwin this majestic scene resign,
For aught the huntsman's puny craft supplies?
Ah! no; he better knows great Nature's charms to prize.

"And oft he traced the uplands, to survey,
When o'er the sky advanc'd the kindling dawn,
The crimson cloud, blue main, and mountain grey,
And lake, dim gleaming on the smoky lawn;
Far to the west the long, long vale withdrawn,
Where twilight loves to linger for a while;
And now he faintly kens the bounding fawn,
And villager abroad at early toil.—
But lo! the sun appears! and heav'n, earth, ocean, smile.

"And oft the craggy cliff he lov'd to climb,
When all in mist the world below was lost.
What dreadful pleasure! there to stand sublime,
Like shipwreck'd mariner on desert coast,
And view th' enormous waste of vapour tost,
In billows, length'ning to th' horizon round,
Now scoop'd in gulfs, with mountains now emboss'd,
And hear the voice of mirth and song rebound,
Flocks, herds, and waterfalls, along the hoar profound.

"In truth, he was a strange and wayward wight,
Fond of each gentle, and each dreadful scene;
In darkness, and in storm, he found delight;
Nor less, than when on ocean-wave serene
The southern sun diffus'd his dazzling shene,

Even sad vicissitude amus'd his soul,
And if a sigh would sometimes intervene,
And down his cheek a tear of pity roll,
A sigh a tear, so sweet, he wish'd not to controul."

After young Beattie had finished his education at the country school, he was sent to the College of New Aberdeen. His father, it is probable, was induced to bestow upon his son an university education, from some hopes of patronage from the Earl of Errol. The abilities of the young grammarian might likewise induce his father to hope, that by the possession of learning his son might be enabled to procure a livelihood, either as a schoolmaster or a clergyman, without that degree of bodily labour which he himself had undergone.

In the interval of the College lessons, we find young Beattie employed in teaching a school at Alloa, in Clackmananshire: an occupation common to almost every literary character in Scotland, who has risen from the lower ranks of life. In this situation, and in others similar to it, he increased his acquaintance with the principles of grammar, and acquired that accurate classical knowledge for which he was afterwards so eminently distinguished.

[*To be continued*]

For the Observer.

BEATRICE IRONSIDE'S BUDGET.

Whilst the insufferable heat of the dog-days, unstrung all the active energies of the mind, and rendered either personal or mental exertion little less than martyrdom, I have been renewing the studies of my youth, and casting a glance over the recording pages of times, which have long ago gone by... but sad is the reflection, that the history of mankind, instead of inspiring the warm glow of emulation, and the eager desire to excel, presents us with little else than the view of the most exalted merit unrewarded, the most heroick virtue treated with injustice, and the most consummate talents, and heaven breathed genius, left to pine in neglect and contempt. This phenomenon, which is so common that it almost ceases to be such, is no longer inexplicable, when we become a little familiar with the turns and windings of the human heart, when a little *lore* in the ways of men, lays open to our contemplation, the various springs of human action. Self-love, that inherent and primitive passion of the breast, solves the mystery.

It is it which inspires the desire of being the first in every thing, and hence arises the backwardness to acknowledge contemporary merit...the perpetual fear of being eclipsed, operates on narrow minds and engenders envy, jealousy and hatred .. from this has arisen the indisposition which men have ever shewn to be instructed: the repugnance with which they have always received the various discoveries and improvements which

genius has laid open to them, and the ingratitude with which they have rewarded so many of those whose transcendant powers have elevated the dignity of human nature, and who by the important knowledge they have taught, have conferred the highest and most lasting benefits on Man. If to this already efficient cause, we add, that men of genius have seldom had the good fortune to live in ages and under governours capable of appreciating and cherishing merit; we cannot be surprised that so many illustrious men have been ill-treated...with the penetrating eye of genius; the taste refined and cultivated by study and the consciousness of superiour powers, is it possible to bend the knee before the ridiculous and vulgar despotism of ignorance and prejudice. Yet these vices are quickly in arms, when any thing offers to oppose them, and those who are under their baneful influence, instead of generously aiming to raise themselves to the level of the merit which offends them, only seek to load it with injury and humiliation.

It would be easy in casting a transient glance over the monuments of history, to draw a strong and lively picture in justification of these truths, of the perverseness of Man, and of the melancholy fate, which has generally been experienced by the most estimable part of human nature; that portion which alone could reflect honour on it, and obtain indulgence for all its crimes and its follies; for all that it has of pitiful and disgusting.

Was not *Homer* the father of poetry, he, the honour of whose birth so many cities have since disputed; he whose glory has been acquiring new lustre for near three thousand years, was he not reduced to beg for charity, whilst he sung his immortal verses to obtain relief from the most pressing wants of nature; how many more have been obliged to imitate this sad example...the *great Belisarius*; with what cold blooded indifference was he abandoned to misery? Æsop was a slave...the just Aristides was banished; Phocion and Socrates were condemned to die as criminals... Anaxagoras for attempting to propagate a just idea of Providence was dragged to prison...the celebrated Aristotle after endless persecutions swallowed poison...whilst in the sixteenth century Ramu was condemned as a state criminal, because he combated some of the opinions of Aristotle.

Virgilius, Bishop of Saltsburg, was declared a heretick and consigned to the flames, by Boniface Arch-Bishop of Mayence, the Pope's legate, because he had written that there existed Antipodes.

In the 14th century, Jean d'Arc, the heroine of Orleans, perished on the stake as a sorceress...in the sixteenth century, Camoens and Cervantes, the immortal Cervantes, both covered with scars, gained in the service of their country, literally starved to death.

The great Tasso was obliged to borrow a crown to subsist on

a week ; in a sonnet to his cat, he entreats her to assist him during the night with the lustre of her eyes.

Non avendo candele per iscrivere i suoi versi !

Galileo who discovered the clock and telescope, was denounced by an ignorant Monk as a heretick, because he believed that the world turned round the sun, and not the sun round the world.

Henry the IVth of France, one of the best of kings, was continually beset with conspiracies against his person ; his best intentions were always misrepresented to those whose happiness he desired, and the poignard of the assassin was often aimed against him.

On adore aujourdhui sa valeur, sa bonté
Quand il etoit au monde, il fut persecuté.....VOLTAIRE.

Corregio, who has since been stiled the painter of the graces, and who was as good an architect as he was a great painter, died of poverty and want.

Racine expired of grief, to find that his master-piece was hissed through the ignorance and malignity of the publick.

The great Milton sold his immortal poem for ten pound.

Otway, Butler, and Chatterton, need but be named.

The charming poet Spencer, languished out his days in misery !

What shall we conclude from these facts and discouraging reflections ? That we must love science like virtue, for itself alone ; that we must cultivate it for self gratification only ; and we may deduce from the recital of the persecutions that those have undergone who have laboured for the amelioration of mankind, that it requires intrepidity to propagate true principles, which may one day be useful to the few who may seek knowledge ; and courage not to be deterred by the injuries to which talents expose their possessors. For if we compare the homage and fortune with which lucky ignorance is generally loaded, with the insulting and overwhelming opposition and ill treatment which the votaries of science and the sons of genius experience, the pursuit of every study which is not LUCRATIVE, would be relinquished, and the thankless task abandoned of improving or amusing the world.

I shall conclude these observations with the epitaph of a young French poet, who far from meeting with the encouragement and protection so richly due to his promising genius, was suffered to die of want in France, in the very age of the triumph of writers and philosophers :

" La faim mit au tombeau Malfilatre ignorè
" S'il nèut étè qu'un Sot, il eut êtè proné."

Malfilatre starved to death in obscurity ; had he been but a rich blockhead he would have been cried up every where.

BIOGRAPHY.

FOR THE OBSERVER.

The Duke de *Montpensier*, the second Prince of the House of Orleans, and who visited this country some years since with his brothers, the *Duke of Orleans* and the *Count de Beaujolois*, died in England, towards the latter end of the month of May last, he was 32 years old, being born the 3d of July, 1775. He is the SEVENTEENTH person of the Bourbon family, who has ended tragically or in exile, since the year 1788....n mely :

1st. In 1788, the *Dauphin*, son of Louis the XVI, died at the age of 7 years, suspected to have been poisoned.

2d. The 2d of September, 1792, the Princess of *Lamballe*, was massacred in the prison de la force, and her body was dragged through the gutters.

3d and 4th. The 21st of January, 1793, Louis the XVIth, and on the 16th of October following, the Queen Maria Antoinetta, were decapitated.

5th. In the same year, died inconsolable for the catastrophe of the Princess de Lamballe, his daughter-in-law, the *Duke de Penthievre*, a Prince as pious as benevolent.

6th. The 12th of May, 1794, the amiable and respectable Princess Elizabeth, sister to Louis the XVIth perished on the scaffold.

7th. The 5th of November following, *Egalité*, ci-devant Duke of Orleans, was guillotined.

8th. The 9th of June, 1795, died of want and ill treatment, in the tower of the temple, the young *Louis the XVIIth*, son of Louis the XVIth. He was ten years old...they had employed him in his prison, in making shoes for the soldiers.

9th and 10th. *Mesdames de France*, both daughters of Louis XVth, and aunts of Louis the XVIth, died one after the other, in flying from the French into Italy.

11th. *Madame Clotilde* of France, sister of Louis the XVIth, Princess of Piedmont, and since Queen of Sardinia, died of grief and affright, in 18**, at Frascati. This excellent and unfortunate Princess had worn mourning for Louis the XVIth, many years in a gown of the coarsest woollen cloth.

12th and 13th. *Madame* the wife of the pretender (Louis the XVIIIth) and the Countess d'Artois her sister, died fugitives in emigration.

14th. In 18++, the King of *Etruria* sinking under Epilepsy, and generally ridiculed, died when he had hardly ascended his tottering throne.

15th. *Ferdinand*, Infanta of Spain, and Duke of Parma, was poisoned in 1803 : a few months before his death, he had instituted France, the heir of his sovreignty.

16th. The 21st of March, 1804, the *Duke d'Enghein*, last re-

maining branch of the house of Condè, and hope of the Bourbons, was shot at 32 years of age.

17th and last, the *Duke de Montpensier* first object of this notice, who has just died in exile.

Perhaps this succinct narration, which recals so much greatness and so many unmerited misfortunes (except in the case of Egalite) may interest those capable of reflecting on the intructive lesson which so many and such terrible vicissitudes present to the mind.

POLITICAL.

For the Observer.

The last catastrophes of the Northern Allies, are too decisive, to admit of any further conjectures; for it may be said, there *is no room for further conjecture,* so evident are the consequences which result from them.

Were it possible to smile at the fall and humiliation of nations, as we are involuntarily tempted to do at the accidental tumble of an individual, perhaps we might forgive ourselves the seeming insensibility, in reading the details of the *friendly* interviews which passed between the victors and the vanquished at the taking of Konigsberg.

The memorable *breakfast* at which the King of Prussia, the ambassadour of Russia and the Emperour of France, so heartily regaled themselves upon *oysters,* is really worthy of the pencil of English caricature, because we have perhaps never seen exemplified in such lively colours, the fable of the intelligent *judge* who to promote peace, swallowed the oysters and gratified his two clients with the empty shells, who remained in silent astonishment at the vastness of his appetite. In short, to complete the piece, we should see the Cross and Banners, the Candalabras and Incensors, offering their homage to the hero of the scene, and chaunting this Anthem, ever old yet ever new:

Vous etes le vrai maitre en etant le plus fort.

You are the true master being the strongest.

TO READERS AND A CORRESPONDENT.

We insert the dream of Somnus, in hopes that he may some time wake to better purpose.

For the Observer.

HISTORICAL EPHEMERIS.

September 12th, 1683, *Jean Sobiesky,* king of Poland, forced a hundred thousand Turks, commanded by the Grand Vizier, to raise the siege of Vienna, which they had cannonaded in vain

since the 24th July. In delivering this capital, *Sobiesky* saved Europe from a threatened invasion of all the Ottoman powers... but after this shining victory, which did not cost the lives of more than 600 Christians, the Emperour received the hero coldly, because he owed him too great a service.

From the 12*th* to the 13*th September*, 1782, the flotilla of gunboats of the combined armies of France and Spain, were burnt and sunk in the attack on Gibraltar, defended for the English by general Elliott.

September 12*th*, 1793, the English army was obliged to raise the siege of Dunkirk suddenly. They lost all their artillery, and the Duke of York was on the point of being taken prisoner.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

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For the Observer.

TO L * * * * *.*

My heart with deepest sorrow swells,
When recollection brings to mind,
The verdant hills and vine-hung dells,
Which I have left so far behind.

Sorrow....to think that I no more
Can tread those sweet enamell'd vales;
No more can cull their flow'ry store,
Or breathe their fragrance-wafting gales.

Yet, still a deeper sorrow hangs
Around my heart—whene'er I view
In fancy's glass—the mutual pangs
We felt when I was forc'd from you.

The glitt'ring tear—the streaming eye—
The throbbing breast—the thrilling smart—
The lengthen'd kiss—and bursting sigh,
Proclaim the anguish of the heart.

Tho' these were griefs, yet these were sweet,
Compar'd to those which now I feel;
To think that we no more shall meet,
No more the rapt'rous kiss shall steal.

Oh! had but fortune prov'd more kind,
And smil'd upon my dawning years;
Then *av'rice*, though to merit blind,
Had giv'n consent, and sav'd our tears.

Yet spite of hard fate's stern decree,
Spite of the bar which av'rice throws
Between us—hope still whispers me,
That Hymen yet shall seal our vows.

Encourag'd thus by pleasing hope,
I'll court the fickle Goddess' smile,
And, though I many a salt tear drop,
The thought of thee will toil beguile.

Therefore, dear girl if thou'lt but prove
As constant as thy faithful swain,
When fate shall will, we'll crown our love,
And never, never part again.

ALBERT.